

# NEW WEST

## Chess Nuts

Remember when BYOB just meant bring your own bottle? Paul Masson Winery, in Saratoga, is changing all that. This July 23 and 24 they'll provide the bottle if you'll bring your own board—for chess. The winery is hosting the fifth annual American Class Chess Tournament, the largest rated outdoor tournament in the world.

While the grapes are ripening on the vine, tables will be set up to accommodate 700 entrants at the historic Mountain Winery. Large umbrellas and native trees will provide the shade to keep contestants cool in the heat of battle. And there will be more rewards than the pleasure of playing in this lovely setting: \$15,000 in cash prizes and bottles of Brut Champagne will go to division winners in the largest prize fund for the least expensive entry fee at any major open tournament.

You may think you're not good enough to enter. Not true. Players compete only with others approximately equal to them in strength. There are eight sections, ranging from master to unrated, as devised by the U.S. Chess Federation's national rating system.

Complimentary wines will be served between rounds, and international chess master George Koltanowski will be on hand for stories and advice. For the gamblers at heart, Koltanowski will also be conducting a "Vegas Fun Chess Tournament" for \$100 in prizes. In this version, moves are determined by throwing dice marked with the playing pieces rather than numbers. Instead of throwing a "one" and a "six," for example, you might throw a "king" and a "rook." You must then move one of those pieces.

The Paul Masson cellars and tasting room are located about one hour's drive south of San Francisco at 1350 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga. The Mountain Winery is only ten minutes from there. You may want to make a stop at the tasting room and sample the wares, then hop on one of the free shuttle buses that run to the chess play every twenty minutes.

Space permitting, guests are welcome to get into the spirit of wine and chess. For more information, call 415 928-3600. Check it out, mates.

—Mard Naman

